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ABSTRACT

This report discusses the Quality Assurance Program at the OSU/WOSC School of Education, a merged school serving Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College. This major reform in teacher education is designed to bring a high level of accountability to teacher education and is called a "Warranty of First-Year Teachers." If, on the basis of systematic evaluation, the graduates of the teacher education program fail to perform satisfactorily as beginning teachers, the School of Education provides direct assistance and support to both the employing school and the new teacher. It prepares almost 700 new teachers each year, and since 1982, fewer than a dozen of them have been evaluated as less than effective. Each of these beginning teachers has received intensive support from the school's faculty. Some of the services offered to the teachers are: on-site consultation with principal and teacher; on-site classroom observation; assistance in curriculum development; and reimbursement for cost of substitute teachers to enable them to work with college faculty members. This warranty program has gained national and international attention and the support of legislators and newspaper editorial boards. It has been replicated at a number of schools of education and community colleges across the country. (SM)

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QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM: BEGINNING TEACHER WARRANTY

OSU/WOSC School of Education

A merged school servicing Oregon State University
and Western Oregon State College
with undergraduate and graduate programs in Education

Robert D. Barr, Dean

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

ABSTRACT

The OSU/WOSC School of Education, a merged school serving Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College, has implemented a major reform in teacher education called the Quality Assurance Program. The primary feature of this program, designed to bring a high level of accountability to teacher education, is a "Warranty of First-Year Teachers." If, on the basis of systematic evaluation, the graduates of the teacher education program fail to perform satisfactorily as beginning teachers, the School of Education provides direct assistance and support to both the employing school and the new teacher. After a year's experience with the warranty, the program has been replicated at a number of schools of education and community colleges across America and has been adopted by WOSC as a campus wide concept. The entire Oregon State System of Higher Education in considering adopting the warranty. The warranty has also been the model for legislation introduced into the U.S. House of Representatives.

INTRODUCTION

In 1982, the School of Education announced a warranty of all beginning teachers. The program focused on those beginning teachers who were evaluated as less than effective by their supervising principal, and provided a number of services to the school and to the beginning teacher. When the program was originated in 1982, the School of Education was not clear on the kinds of services that it could provide. Since that time, a fairly comprehensive set of services have emerged that have proved to be worthwhile. The OSU/WOSC School of Education is a large producer of teachers in Oregon and the Northwest. It is one of the nation's largest schools of education. It prepares almost 700 new teachers each year, more than half of all new teachers employed in the State of Oregon. Since 1982, fewer than a dozen teachers have been evaluated as less than effective. Each of these beginning teachers have received intensive support from the faculty of the School of Education, and in some cases, have been provided with tuition fee remissions to return to campus for a summer of academic study at no cost to them.

The warranty program has been described in the Kappan, the Journal of Teacher Education, and The New York Times. It has received the AASCU Showcase of Excellence Award and has been a finalist in the prestigious Mitau Award. It has been the focus of Federal Legislation and, most recently, was selected to be included in a Japanese Public Broadcasting film on innovations in education through the world. The program has been replicated in over a dozen other colleges and universities throughout the country.

BACKGROUND

The quality assurance and the beginning teacher warranty program was initiated in a response to the intense criticism of teacher education that has occurred during the last two decades. It was also founded on a belief that Schools of Education should maintain strict accountability for their teacher education programs. Negative perceptions of teacher education programs were so wide spread that the announcement of the beginning teacher warranty program was met by disbelief by much of the media, and prompted very favorable editorials by nearly every newspaper in the State of Oregon. The program was applauded by principals, as well as by beginning teachers. It was also supported by the faculty of the School of Education. Since its creation in 1982, similar programs have been created at a number of major colleges and universities, community colleges and vocational training centers.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

In fall 1983, the Oregon State University-Western Oregon State College (OSU-WOSC) School of Education (a merger) announced a "Quality Assurance Program" that provided a warranty for all graduates of its teacher education program. Under the program, the school would provide no-cost consultation, support, and additional coursework to graduates who fail to meet the standards for first-year teachers set by their principals and the employing school districts.

"Unless each graduate performs at satisfactory levels of proficiency for a first-year teacher, the teacher and local principal will receive assistance in developing and implementing a plan of assistance designed to improve teacher effectiveness in areas of identified weakness," Barr says. "And it will be at no cost to the teacher or district." The plan of assistance may include re-enrolling the beginning teacher for tuition-free summer courses, sending a faculty member to observe the teacher in the classroom, or providing counseling, evaluation, and remedial work.

The program at OSU-WOSC, designed in cooperation with teachers and administrators throughout the state, works like this: The Oregon State Department of Education has adopted guidelines for evaluation of first-year teachers that call for public school principals to perform three classroom observations. If a principal deems the performance of a beginning teacher "less than satisfactory." the principal develops a "plan of assistance" designed to improve the teacher's performance in specified areas of weakness. Each plan of assistance includes an objective analysis of observable difficulties and a statement of immediate goals for improvement.

This program of evaluation and assistance is a solid structure to which the concept of warranty assurance can be anchored. If a principal finds the performance of a first-year teacher unsatisfactory, the OSU-WOSC School of Education will review the evaluations of the teacher, help design the plan of assistance, and provide consultant services to both the principal and the teacher. Following are examples of types of services that have been provided:

* On-site consultation with principal and teacher,
* On-site classroom observation,
* Opportunity for students to participate in weekend professional development workshops and conferences, such as classroom management and assertive discipline,

* Reimbursement for cost of substitute teachers to enable first-year teachers to work with college faculty members,

* Assistance in curriculum development and instructional techniques,

* Toll-free telephone assistance for teachers.

The warranty also includes an opportunity for beginning teacher who are having trouble taking additional education courses. All of these support services -- and any others that become necessary -- are provided at no cost to the school district or to the beginning teachers who use them.

The OSU-WOSC School of Education prepares more teachers than any other program in the state, and most of the new teachers employed in Oregon each year are graduates of the OSU-WOSC program. Nearly 700 new teachers graduate annually from the OSU-WOSC program, and 90 percent are employed within three years after graduation.

The School of Education is providing warranty follow-up services for these graduates within existing budgets. Each department within the School of Education that recommends a teacher for certification bears the warranty responsibility for that teacher.

During the first year of the warranty program, nearly 100 graduates and their employers submitted the warranty agreement to obtain coverage. Of that group, there were many requests for referrals, information, and modest assistance. There were six formal requests as part of the warranty, and after two students were evaluated as having deficiencies as beginning teachers, they returned to campus and enrolled free of charge in the 1985 summer session.

The warranty has attracted national and international interest. It has been described in The New York Times, AACTE Newsletter, Journal of Teacher Education, Phi Delta Kappan, and even Stars and Stripes in the Pacific. It was also used as a model for proposed legislation for national warranty. More important, it has helped college faculty members become far more careful in their selection process, encouraged the raising of entrance and graduation standards, and provided an entirely new way of working with local schools.

Today, with more than 140 faculty members, the OSU-WOSC School of Education is the largest in the state and graduates approximately 700 new teachers each year. OSU-WOSC was the first major School of Education in the nation to implement a warranty. Since that time, a number of other education programs have started warranty programs, some of them using materials from OSU-WOSC. Other schools of education now using a warranty include

those at Purdue University, University of Virginia, University of Northern Colorado, Eastern Washington University, and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. Western Oregon State College is planning to expand the teacher warranty to cover graduates of its other programs. In January, 1985, legislation was introduced in the House calling for a national warranty based on the OSU-WOSC model.

RESULTS

Preparing almost 700 teachers per year, less than a dozen beginning teachers have been evaluated as ineffective and applied for warranty support. Of these students, four have returned with tuition fee remissions for a summer of graduate study at the school's expense. All of the warranty teachers are now teaching in the State of Oregon and doing an effective job. For specific evaluation data, see "The Warranty, One Year Later" by Robert D. Barr in the Kappan, October, 1985. (See attached).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The warranty of beginning teachers has proved to be a million dollar public relations program for the School of Education. It has gained us national and international attention and has gained support of legislators and newspaper editorial boards in the state and region. It has also lead to strong followup support of beginning teachers. The program has also lead to a Beginning Teacher Clinic that provides additional services for new teachers. The warranty program offers a remarkable system of accountability for teacher education programs; one that should be considered by every school and department of education.